

**BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Amy Kiyota Kimura, Allen Kiyota, and Trudy Kiyota**

*"I consider myself a plantation girl only because, you hear plantation stories, where all these plantation people came from. How the older generation came to Hawai'i way back and how hard they struggled. And because I am part of that and I know how hard they worked. I want people to know that plantation life was hard way back and still is hard now. I want people to know that. I am not ashamed to say I am a plantation [girl]."* (Amy Kiyota Kimura)

Shoichi Kiyota and his wife, Sadako, had four children, all of whom were born in Lahaina and raised in Mill Camp, a community located next to the Pioneer Mill. Three of their children were interviewed simultaneously for this project.

Amy Kiyota Kimura was born in 1935, attended King Kamehameha III School and Lahainaluna High School, graduating in 1953. That same year, she left Maui for Honolulu to attend Honolulu Business College. While living with an aunt in Kaimukī, Amy worked as a maid for a local family. She eventually found employment with the State of Hawai'i. Retired since 1998. Amy lives on O'ahu with her husband, Alexander Kimura, a former Moloka'i resident who met Amy while boarding at Lahainaluna. The couple raised two children and has three grandchildren.

Born in 1939, Allen also attended King Kamehameha III School and Lahainaluna High School, graduating in 1957. One week after graduation he enlisted in the U.S Air Force, serving four years of active duty. He then joined the Hawai'i Army National Guard as a radar operator and attended National Guard officer candidate school. He had a twenty-three-year career as a circuit designer for Hawaiian Telephone Company. After taking early retirement in 1993, Allen has been employed part-time as a custodian/bus driver at a Honolulu private school. Married since 1969, he and his wife raised two children.

Born during World War II, in 1943, Trudy, the youngest sibling, was born at Lahainaluna School in a building converted into a hospital for the war years. Like her siblings, she attended King Kamehameha III School and graduated from Lahainaluna in 1961. After traveling to Honolulu to attend what is today known as Kapi'olani Community College, Trudy continued her education at Western New Mexico University in Silver City, New Mexico. After receiving her teaching degree, she taught in New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Alaska before retiring in 1997. She returned to Lahaina in 1999 to care for her parents. An O'ahu resident since 2002, Trudy raised one daughter and has a grandson.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Amy Kiyota Kimura (AK),

Allen Kiyota (AlK) and Trudy Kiyota (TK)

Kāne'ohe, O'ahu

June 4, 2003

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Amy Kiyota Kimura, for the Pioneer Mill oral history project, on June 4, 2003, and we are at her home in Kāne'ohe, O'ahu. Interviewer is Warren Nishimoto. Also present at the interview are Allen Kiyota (AlK) and Trudy Kiyota (TK).

Okay, I am interviewing Amy Kimura, Allen Kiyota, and Trudy Kiyota, on June 4, 2003 in Kāne'ohe.

Amy, why don't we start with you. Tell me when and where you were born.

AK: Okay, I'm the second oldest from a family of four. My older brother passed away so there're just three of us left. I was born in Lahaina, Maui, at the Pioneer Mill Hospital in 1935. And I attended [King] Kamehameha III School, we call it Kam III School, from kindergarten to eighth grade. But I was very fortunate in that I remember going to preschool, so apparently my mom had enrolled me in preschool. I don't remember too much about it, but it was a preschool. I enjoyed grammar school and I especially enjoyed third grade because we had a teacher, Mrs. Emma Sharpe, she was my favorite. So every day I would bring her flowers.

WN: Sharp?

AK: Sharp.

WN: Oh, is that related to the Farden family?

AK: Yes.

WN: Oh.

AK: I later took *hula* lessons from her while I was in the seventh grade. Seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh grades, I took *hula* lessons. After graduation from—oh am I going ahead?

WN: That's okay.

AK: Growing up in the plantation camp of Kuhua, which was near the mill . . .

WN: Is that another name for Mill Camp?

AK: Yeah. Kuhua was the proper name, I guess, for Mill Camp. My father worked for the plantation and my mom worked for Baldwin Packers, which was the pineapple company. There was a grandmother, a paternal grandmother, who lived with us. Grandmother worked for the Pioneer Mill Company.

WN: What was her name?

AK: Emi, E-M-I. Emi Kiyota. She passed away in 1949. I was about the eighth grade, I think. But she lived with us, so I was able to pick up the Japanese language a little bit from her living with us. You know, my mom would talk to her in Japanese and the neighbors would talk to her in Japanese. Although I cannot speak fluent Japanese, I know some words.

Now when I look back, we were poor. But at that time I didn't know that we were poor. We went to school barefooted. We had to wear our clothes to school for two days. We would go to school, and as soon as we came home from school we had to change, hang our clothes up, so that we could wear it to school the next day.

WN: How far away was Kam III School from your house?

AK: It's about a mile. More than that? Well, one-and-a-half miles then.

AIK: I would say it's about two to three miles from our house to Kam III School.

AK: Yeah, because when I [would] do the morning walk from our house to Kam III School and back, it's one hour. And I do twenty-minute miles. So back and forth is three miles. But anyway, when you're small, a mile seems like three, four miles.

(Laughter)

AK: A small hill seems like a mountain.

WN: Was it flat?

AK: Yeah. And we were very fortunate in that we were one of the very few families in the camp that had a car. So my mom or my dad occasionally would take us to school in the morning and that was one of the biggest treats for us, to be taken to school by my mom or dad.

WN: What's the earliest car you remember?

AK: It was a 1935 Plymouth, and I was born in 1935. I don't know whether they picked it up new or not, but it was a 1935 Plymouth that served us until I don't know how long. When I was in high school, because I tried to get a license. It was a stick shift, and I tried to get a license in that Plymouth and I just didn't have any coordination.

WN: Drive standard today (chuckles)?

AK: No, I don't know how to drive a standard [shift] car. So we had it until I was in high school, I think. After I left high school, then they got another automatic car maybe.

WN: Now why was it that your father had a car? Was he one of the only ones in the camp?

AK: There were other people but at that time there were very few families that had cars, very, very few. And if I heard correctly, didn't Dad and Mom had some kind of taxi service? No, nobody heard about that?

AIK: I don't remember that.

AK: I don't know. I don't know why they had a car.

Growing up in the camp, we had to take a bath in the camp bathhouse, which was like three, four houses away from us. That bathhouse was divided in four. Well first of all, you divide it in half because the half would be female and male. And the other half was Filipino female and male. So actually it was four, four bathhouses.

WN: So Japanese female, Japanese male, Filipino female, Filipino male.

AK: Right?

WN: Oh wow. Allen, you were going to say something?

AIK: You're talking about the community bath, right?

AK: Yeah.

AIK: I don't remember it being divided into four. I remember two, male and female.

AK: Yeah but the Filipinos did not bathe with us.

AIK: Where was the Filipino one?

AK: It was like this.

WN: Rectangular.

AK: Yeah, here was the female and here was the male. The Filipino one was male and female, separate. It was four. The Filipinos did not bathe with us.

AIK: Oh I don't remember that.

WN: Maybe earlier times, yeah, you know, they segregated like that.

AK: They didn't bathe with us. And it was a treat, because it was like a swimming pool to us, you know.

(Laughter)

AK: You take a bath, and we didn't know what shame was or anything. It was just go in, take a bath.

WN: So the people were saying that the kids using the bath—you know, the old-timers would use it the proper way, they would (laughs) . . .



AK: Wash outside.

WN: . . . wash [their bodies] outside and then go inside [the tub to soak]. As kids, how did you folks treat the bath?

AK: Same thing, we'd wash outside and then jump in the big pond, I mean not pond but the big . . .

AIK: The *furo*.

AK: . . . tub, huge big tub. Supposedly you're supposed to soak yourself in there, otherwise you just wash yourself outside, and throw the water over you and get out.

WN: So you soap up outside first?

AK: Yeah, we soap up outside.

WN: No soap allowed inside.

AK: No, no, that was it. Outhouse also. There were four outhouses in one building. I guess you can call it one building. One outhouse to a family, and it was about more than six-feet deep with a wooden cover over it and a hole. We had the corner outhouse, so we were very lucky in that my dad had installed electricity from our house to the outhouse, so that we would be able to see in the dark when we use it. Because it was . . .

WN: How far away?

AK: Gee . . .

AIK: Well, you go (outside) down the steps from the kitchen it's about twenty, thirty feet maybe. But like you said it was dark at night (chuckles).

AK: And we didn't have street lights at those times, so it was really dark.

WN: But this was your own personal one? This was not shared with other members of the camp?

AK: No, no. Only four houses and each house had their own outhouse, but the four outhouses were all attached.

AIK: The way it was arranged you have a cluster of four homes, and right in the middle you have a building that was the outhouse. And the building was divided into four stalls, and ours was the first stall on the left. From our house to the stall was where my father installed (lights).

WN: And the other three didn't have lights in theirs?

AIK: Didn't have.

AK: No, they didn't have lights (WN laughs).

TK: I think Mom got up early in the morning to go to work. She had to cook and all that. Early in the morning was what, four o'clock?

AK: Yeah.

TK: Trying to go out in the dark would be pretty scary. They had to have a light out there.

AK: And in the back of our house, we had this family, the mother made tofu. So she had a small tofu shop in the back of her house. She'd be making the tofu from like . . .

AIK: Very early in the morning.

AK: Early, two, two-thirty, three o'clock in morning. So she was the one that would be the first to go to the bathroom, I guess. But like I said, we were poor. I recall using tissue way back then—they used to wrap the fruits, oranges and apples in tissue paper. And we used that tissue paper for toilet paper. I even remember using newspapers. Of course you had to crumple it up before you used it. But we used newspapers when we went to the bathroom.

WN: Now were you folks---each family was responsible for cleaning up their own . . .

AK: Yeah.

WN: . . . or maintaining their own messes?

AIK: There really wasn't much as far as cleaning up, you know, I mean . . .

AK: But their. . .

AIK: You're talking about keeping the bathroom itself clean?

AK: Yeah.

AIK: Yeah, there really wasn't that much to do.

AK: Mom would . . .

TK: Spray.

AK: Clorox with disinfectant. So the water, because there wasn't an opening under each stall, when Mom would wash with the hose pipe, the water would naturally run to the next stall and then the third stall, then the fourth stall.

WN: Oh, there's like a trough underneath?

AK: No, it's concrete. But if she were to shoot our concrete, the water would naturally run down to the next one, the next one. So I'm sure what she did was she just hosed down the entire (floor), but she didn't go in each stall and (hose it down). She would do ours because every now and then when we go in, you could smell that disinfectant in ours.

WN: I see. But what about underneath, how was it? Was it like a hole?

AK: Underneath the. . .

WN: You know for the waste. I mean was it like a running trough or . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: No, we're talking about the running underneath, was there like a running water constantly, underneath?

AK: Yeah. It was all concrete. Even the walls were concrete.

AIK: The toilet itself was a concrete—how you might say that? It's a concrete hole.

WN: Oh, it's concrete not wood.

AIK: It's a concrete hole and it was big enough—it was one big concrete hole divided into four stalls. And every stall had their own seat. And as far as the waste being carried away, for every outhouse building, there was sort of like a little reservoir. I don't know where the reservoir was located, but every so often it would release water and the water would come down the little hole at the bottom. Then the water would just wash the waste away.

WN: Like periodically.

AIK: Periodically yeah. It's not one of those that had water already in it so when you do your thing you can hear your thing plopping in the water, no. It was just concrete, bare concrete. But when the water comes down it washes everything away.

WN: And how deep was it?

AIK: Approximately six feet.

WN: Oh six feet?

AIK: Yeah.

WN: Oh okay.

AK: Very deep.

WN: (To AIK:) Tell me when and where you were born.

AIK: I was born in September 1939, also in Lahaina, Pioneer Mill Hospital. I (attended) [King] Kamehameha III School from kindergarten to eighth grade. I completed (grade school) in 1953. I went on to Lahainaluna High School, graduating in 1957.

WN: What do you remember about your father and mother? What kind of people were they?

AIK: My father was very, very strict. There were a lot of things that he wouldn't allow us to do. Of course there were things that he didn't want us to do but we did it anyway, just with the hope of not being caught. And one of the things I liked to do was to climb the mango trees to pick mangos. These mango trees were tall, very tall, and we used to climb up to the top to go pick mangos.

WN: How high up would you climb it?

AIK: I climbed to the top of one by the Teshima pigpen, I would say about thirty, forty feet, and being a kid, that's high. But I went up there, climbed, and sat at the top of the tree eating mangos and just dropping the peels down (laughs).

TK: It's better that way.

(Laughter)

WN: Did you have that kind of, you know, the stick with the net that you pluck off, too? Or was it all by hand when you climbed?

AIK: We probably had it, but when you're playing with your friends and you just, on the spur of the moment decide, oh let's go eat mango, we just find a tree that has mango and just climb it. Sit up in the tree and just eat.

WN: And what kind mango was there mostly in Lahaina?

AIK: I used to think that the Spanish mango was probably the best. We had Hayden, but I never got the taste for Hayden mango. Right where the pigpens were, they were all Common mangos. Common mangos are better for making mango seed, preserved mango. And we also had another one called Chestnut, but the bad thing about Chestnut mango is that it's very, very stringy. Guarantee that if you bite into it you get the string all stuck between your teeth. So the way we used to eat that was you get a ripe one, and without breaking the skin, just smash it so that it gets really, really soft. And then on the front of it just make a little hole and you suck the juice out. You wouldn't eat the flesh itself because, like I said, it's too stringy.

WN: But was it as sweet as . . .

AIK: Sweet. It was good.

AIK: I don't see that kind of mangos any more.

AK: Those special mangos were usually grown in people's yard.

AIK: Yeah.

AK: But the ones that he talked about were by the river, ravine or whatever, down the street. There were a lot of trees along the river, even plum trees, and so we would go down to the river. I used to climb the plum trees with a cane knife because you couldn't reach the plum. So I'd chop the branches so that the branch would bend and I could get the plums. And we had a paper sack (to put plums in).

WN: What kind of plum is this? Not the kind you buy in the store, yeah?

AK: No, no, no. I don't know.

TK: Fruits that you see along the road in season.

WN: Oh.

TK: They fall. They're all purple inside. Kind of small.

WN: You still see it today?

TK: Oh yeah.

WN: Oh, I wonder what the formal name for that is?

TK: We called them plum (laughs).

WN: Plum.

AK: So, we never went hungry, because it was either you eat the plum, you eat mango, or there used to be this kind of vine that grew along and had that . . .

TK: Red.

AK: . . . red, I guess you would call it . . .

AIK: *Pohā*.

AK: . . . berries or whatever.

AIK: *Pohā* right?

AK: We called it *pohā*.

AIK: *Pohā*, has the black seeds inside.

AK: Yeah. We used to eat that, we never went hungry. Tamarind, pick up the tamarind, take it home and cook it with *shōyu* and sugar. Oooh.

WN: And then what, how did you eat that?

AK: Just eat it like that.

WN: *Shōyu* and sugar?

AK: Sugar.

AIK: I think you boil it, right? You boil it until the sugar . . .

WN: You boil it with the pod or you take the . . .

AK: No.

AIK: The ones that she's talking about is the one that's dried and it either fell from the tree or you picked it, but it's dried. The covering is dried. So you have to peel all that covering off until you get to the inside. It has that brownish sticky substance, or seeds. And when you have enough of that you put it in a pot and you make a mixture of *shōyu* and sugar, and you mix it up. It's kind of in a liquid form but you boil it until it gets almost like a taffy-type texture. I guess the thicker it is, the better it is. Then you just eat it like that. What you're actually eating is the tamarind itself. It's the flesh you might say, around the seed, the dried flesh. And you eat that and you discard the seed.

- AK: But you can eat only so much because after a while your tongue starts to get sore, you know.
- AIK: Yeah.
- WN: (Chuckles) You eat it like candy? Some of it was kind of like candy?
- TK: Mm-hmm [yes].
- WN: Oh okay.
- AK: That's what we did with the mango, too. We'd pick green mangos, take it home, peel it, and then we'd slice it up. And you had a mixture of sugar, salt, and pepper. If you don't like that, we'd mix it up with *shōyu*-sugar and mix the mango in there, and we let it stand for little while and then we'd eat it.
- WN: Now this is with, not Hayden, but with . . .
- AK: Common.
- AIK: Common was best to eat when it's green.
- AK: We never knew what was Hayden mango at that time, yeah?
- AIK: Yeah.
- WN: Funny, yeah, because that's the most common now.
- AIK: But surprisingly you don't see very much Common mangos anymore.
- WN: But Lahaina still has, yeah? I seen 'em.
- TK: Very little.
- AIK: They're probably still there. Like in the camp now where the pigpens were, it's still there.
- TK: It's not something that people would plant in their yards. It's one of the undesirable mangos, I guess you would say, because it's so common.
- WN: You mean Hayden?
- AK: No, we talking about Common mangos.
- WN: Trudy, tell us when you were born.
- TK: I was born in 1943. This was during the time of the war, so the hospital was used for that—so I was born in one of the dorms in Lahainaluna [School].
- WN: They transformed that into like a hospital . . .
- TK: Right.
- WN: . . . during the war? Oh.

TK: I can't remember which dorm it was.

WN: Okay, and you went to Kamehameha III School.

TK: Went to Kamehameha III School. For the first maybe two years, I rode to school with the neighbors because the neighbor had an aunt who taught at the school, so we caught a ride with them. After that I started walking, until my eighth grade year. Then I went to Lahainaluna. We rode on the bus to school every day.

(Laughter)

TK: Finished [high school] in 1961. And I basically did the same thing that they did when they were little, climb the tree when we weren't supposed to. Amy said we were poor, and we were poor, and so we had to make up games that didn't include toys that we had to buy at the store. Every now and then we'd look in people's trash cans for a certain kind of can, and I liked the cream cans.

WN: Oh the Carnation cream [cans]?

TK: And we'd find two, Carnation cream, and there were those certain type of beans that we would look for down by the river. And we would peel the bean, and this bean was really sticky, and we'd rub that under our feet and rub it (on one side of the can) so that we could stick the can to our feet and walk on both cans. And you could hear the kids coming with the cans under their feet (WN laughs) walking on the street, and it made a lot of noise. We used to call it, *kankoro geta*, because it made so much noise.

WN: *Kankoro?*

AK: *Kankoro geta.*

TK: The Carnation cream cans and tuna cans were the best kind, so we would always look for tuna cans also. We'd find two of them and put a little hole on top of each can, and put a string high enough so you could hold it with your hand. And the string would go between your big toe and your second toe and you would walk with the tuna can.

WN: Holding on to the string?

TK: Right. I don't know what that was called. We had to make up our own names, but that was one of the other things that we used to do.

WN: So this is the short tuna can?

TK: Yeah. It was the six-ounce can?

AK: I don't know.

WN: Now the can would already be opened though, right?

TK: Right.

WN: So the bottom part would be kind of . . .

TK: It's open.



WN: . . . hollow. The thing would be hollow.

TK: Yeah. So we'd put the string in the can, tie a knot or . . .

AK: Nail.

TK: . . . put a nail so that the string wouldn't come through. Make it long enough so that it reaches the other end and then you pull the string and walk with the string between our toes.

WN: So even like the cream can, if you would put the sticky thing on your feet and walk on it, it held your weight?

TK: It did. Well, eventually it got smashed, but I think everybody did that.

AIK: At that time we were kids so we were relatively small, so the cans wouldn't really smash that much. Eventually it would smash but being so small, the can was able to hold our weight for a while, and we just kind of walked around for a while. And once it got so badly used, we'd just take 'em off. And what she said about the tuna can, it was really neat because once you get on it and you start walking, it sounds like there was a horse coming down the road. (AIK imitates sound; WN laughs.) You can hear that distinct sound. It was really cute.

WN: So the roads were macadamized by that time?

AIK: No, it was all dirt road. So we played games on the road, and only on the road we could play because you needed an unpaved area. We played home-run. Home-run was made up of lines on the road by dragging your feet and making the lines. Or using can that has a hole and you put water in to make the water line a little bit straight. We played *peewee* . . .

AK: Steal eggs.

TK: Steal eggs. Mom's broom stick would always end up short because we'd cut the stick to make (WN laughs) *peewee* sticks. Steal eggs, we used rocks to play.

WN: What is steal eggs?

TK: Well, one team had a round goal of I don't know how many rocks, maybe five or six. The other team, a few yards away, would have another round circle with the same number of rocks. And you try to have the same number of team players on each team. And once you left your goal, the other opponents would try to catch you and then you become a prisoner on the other side. The object of the game is try to steal the opponent's eggs and bring them back to your goal.

WN: And what is home-run?

TK: Home-run was made up of lines, kind of hard to explain. You had two teams. You'd draw lines on the road, parallel lines I guess, about six feet away.

AIK: Well maybe six feet.

TK: Then you would have on the lines a watchman, I guess you'd call them. Each parallel line had somebody standing on the line. And the opponents had to try to cross your line to get to the end of the lines. Once you reach the other end you had to come back without being tagged. And once you're tagged you had to stay on the line to . . .

AK: Stay in the block.

TK: Oh, you stay in the block?

WN: Oh, and then you could move later?

TK: I don't know how you became saved or whatever.

WN: And that's called home-run?

AK: Mm-hmm [yes].

WN: Oh, that had nothing to do with baseball then (laughs).

AK: Oh no.

TK: Just lines and no objects, you know.

WN: Mm-hmm.

TK: And I remember my parents being very hard workers. Dad being very strict, Mom on the quiet side. And she would get up very early in the morning to fix her lunch for work. And Amy talked about the outhouse. One morning Mom went to the outhouse and she described herself as just getting ready to sit on the seat and she saw (these feet) (laughs) on the concrete floor. And this person was stretched all the way across the floor. I guess he had been drunk the night before and he decided to sleep in the toilet.

AK: And so actually when she opened the door to go into the outhouse . . .

TK: She saw him?

AK: Not when she was ready to sit, because he was stretched from one outhouse to another, one foot in the third one, and then his body in the second one, and maybe (WN chuckles) part of his head or arm in ours.

TK: Yeah, because the stalls were divided but the walls were . . .

WN: How far up?

TK: Maybe a foot.

WN: Couple feet or one foot. Oh I see.

TK: He was able to do that.

WN: It's just like [bathroom] stalls today.

TK: Right.

ALK: Yeah, if you're sitting in one stall and somebody comes in the next stall because of the space you can see the person's feet next to you.

WN: Right (laughs).

ALK: The outhouse that we had, the space was about a foot high. So naturally when that guy came in the stall he was sprawled out all four.

AK: And the funny thing, excuse me, the funny thing about that was that the lady who makes the tofu usually gets up before Mom does, so she uses the bathroom before Mom does. But that morning instead of going to the bathroom she was too lazy. She said she was going to do it in her yard.

(Laughter)

AK: Had she gone into the bathroom that morning, her stall would have been pitch black. She would actually have stepped on that man's body. It just happened that my mom was first (WN laughs). 'Cause Mom had the light, but the door was closed. So when she opened her door to go in, there he was.

ALK: Of that four homes that shared that toilet, there were three Japanese families, our neighbor, ourselves, and then another Japanese family, the lady that makes tofu. But in the far corner, the fourth house was a single Filipino men's home. And their bathroom was the second one from the other end. In other words, from us it would be the third one, us, the neighbor, and then the Filipino. (Laughs) Maybe that night he was drinking, I don't know.

WN: So the structure itself was wood . . .

ALK: Wood.

WN: But the floor was concrete.

ALK: Yes.

WN: Oh okay. Funny yeah, how we always ended up returning to [talking about] outhouses.

AK: Yeah.

(Laughter)

TK: You know, growing up those years, trespassing was not a word we knew. We would always walk through people's yards, took the short cut (chuckles). No one said anything. No one would scold us.

ALK: Yeah, people would always pass through our yard, too, to get to the lady who made tofu, and that way they could buy fresh tofu every day. People went back and forth through our yard but we never thought anything about it because we used to do the same thing. Coming home from school we'd walked through their yard and take a shortcut to get to the other side, but nobody said anything.

WN: I'm curious, this tofu, did she sell it anywhere?

- TK: Oh yeah, she sold it to the local market.
- WN: Oh.
- AK: Into the community.
- WN: Did she go like house to house or anything like that?
- AK: They came to her.
- WN: Oh I see.
- TK: She would always bring some to our house, too. We would have *okara* or *aburage* (chuckles). So we had our fill of tofu.
- WN: How would you compare that tofu with what you get today?
- TK: We would pay a quarter when we bought them, and they were about twice the size of what the store sells them now. And *aburage*, they were really good (chuckles). I think the *aburage* was about twice the size.
- WN: Okay, let's talk about your mom. You said that she worked at Baldwin Packers and she got up and made her lunch and so forth. She was the easier-going one, of the two?
- AK: Of the two, my mom . . .
- WN: How so?
- AK: Dad was just like the king of the house.
- AIK: Yeah, it seems like any time we needed any kind of help, rather than going to my father, we always went to my mom. She was the one that we looked up to more. We were just afraid to ask our father for anything (laughs). We were just afraid of what he might say or what he might do, and how he might react.
- AK: But you know, I don't know about you guys, but I don't recall him ever hitting me. If he did hit me, I've forgotten about it maybe because I don't want to remember that. But I don't recall him ever hitting me, although Allen once said that he did. But he was strict, yeah he was strict.
- TK: Oh he was strict. Nobody would want to fight with us because if we ended up crying and going home, Dad would come out with a stick and go after the kid. (Laughs)
- WN: How was his English?
- TK: Pidgin. He was very fluent in Japanese, of course.
- WN: Oh that's right, your dad and mom were nisei.
- AK: Yeah.
- WN: And what about your mom, was her English pretty good?

AK: Yes.

TK: Mom was a self-teaching person. She learned how to use the typewriter, type and. . .

AK: The piano.

TK: . . . she played the piano, and she would crochet and knit and did all kinds of crafts.

WN: How did she learn the piano?

TK: She just bought books and was determined to play. And so Dad bought her a really old honky-tonk piano from a Filipino guy, and when he brought it home it was full of termites (chuckles). Mom would play it and eventually he bought her another one.

WN: Did she ever tell you folks stories about their growing up? Like did they come from very different types of backgrounds? Similar?

AK: I don't know much about my dad because we never really talked too much to my dad, but Mom would tell us stories about her growing up days and it was really sad in what she had to endure. My mom was the second oldest I think, and below her there were about four or five more. Anyway, I don't know if my grandmother folks could afford her or not, but supposedly they threw her in the rubbish dump. Remember I told you before, the camps used to have areas where people would go and throw their rubbish. We didn't have these garbage collectors coming. Well anyway, the term she used was that they threw her in the rubbish area and this man and wife picked her up and raised her as theirs. And she had a very unhappy childhood because of that family. It was just like she was a slave. Correct me if I'm wrong but I remember she telling us that when she was going to graduate in grade school she needed a pair of shoes so badly, but they wouldn't get her a pair of shoes. She is telling us this story and I am listening with tears in my eyes 'cause she said she would have been the only girl without her shoes, and so embarrassing and whatnot. She had a hard life, she really had a hard life. But she got married when she was sixteen to my dad, real young. So apparently she left that family and came to live with my dad and his mother. And I think she started to work in the [Baldwin Packers] cannery right away. But I wouldn't say she had an easy life. Real sad when you hear her talk about her childhood days. It is sad.

WN: And the grandmother that lived with you folks was your paternal side?

AK: Yeah. Grandmother lived with us until I was about eighth grade. Like I said, I learned a lot of Japanese words from her because that's all she spoke. She worked in the camp, in the plantation camp, I remember. These areas where people threw their rubbish, she would burn the rubbish. She would go from one spot of the camp and burn the rubbish, tend to the burning and whatnot. And then she would go to another spot and do the same thing. Now I don't know what happened, you know, like if she burned and there were cans or bottles or whatever. I don't recall what she did with that kind of rubbish. Maybe a truck came by later to pick them up or not, but that was my grandmother's job.

AIK: I don't know much about Grandmother either, because the last I remember was . . .

AK: Yeah, because you were in fourth grade, yeah?

AIK: When she died, yeah.

AK: So I was eighth grade.

AlK: My grandfather was already gone so I don't know anything about him.

TK: But Grandma babysat me for a while, I guess, before I went to school. So Mom said I was pretty fluent in Japanese at the time. It was my first language, but I don't recall (chuckles).

WN: Too bad, yeah? (Laughs)

TK: I remember Grandma making a game after we ate lunch, I guess. She would give me a cold bath before a nap with the water that we used in the *furo* from the night before. She would always give me a cold bath. And then I go run in the house, you know, naked (laughs) and jump on the bed and that would have been nap time. And this was every day while she took care of me. But that's just about the only thing I remember of her.

AK: Although we keep on saying Dad was strict, Mom and Dad really took the time out to play with us. And Dad loved to fish. When he'd go fishing down Māla Wharf, he'd take us with him. When he'd go *lamalama* at night, when it's shallow, he'd take us with him. He'd take us crabbing at night. Swimming, he always took us swimming. And while we were swimming, he's picking up seaweed or he's picking up *wana*. In the evenings after dinner we'd play out on the street. Mom and Dad were always there with us, so all the neighborhood kids would come and play with us. The street would be full of kids playing with us with Mom and Dad. They were always involved.

WN: So all the things like gathering *wana*, gathering *ogo*, and so forth, it was all in the same place, near Māla?

AK: No, along the beaches, Lahaina beaches, we had nice beaches before the hotels came up, so we went there, swam, while he did all the other things. But he took us all over the place. We also raised pigs down by the river where I told you, the river where the mango trees grew.

WN: Right.

AK: Well, we had some pigs along with other people in the community who raised pigs, and we were one of the families that raised pigs. Certain houses we'd ask for their pig slop and we'd go with the car.

TK: Maybe that's why we had the car.

AK: With the car we'd go to pick up the pig slop. And then sometimes what we'd do is we'd drive for miles out Honolua way—they call it Kapalua today, but it's Honolua way—to pick up grass. The grass is called purslane, but we used to call it *higusa*.

WN: *Higusa*?

AK: *Higusa*, but it's . . .

WN: It's Japanese, huh?

AK: *Higusa*, yeah. But it's purslane, the name of the grass is purslane. We would go and pick grass and put it in these burlap bags and put as many bags as we could in the car, trunk.

And on the way home, sometimes, although the car was full of grass, and we had to sit on the bags of grass and no room for us, he'd stop on the way home at the beach to let us swim. The next day or so, what he'd do is, in a big drum, huge drum, he'd boil the water and throw the grass in to cook the grass . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

AK: We had three pens.

AIK: Three pens, yes.

AK: One was a mother pig; he always had a mother pig. And the piglets he would sell. I remember he had two pigs this side. At the time I was going with my husband, so I would still remember that the pigs were called Amy and Alex.

(Laughter)

AK: I don't know what he did with them. He must have sold them.

AIK: At one time, at the most, we had maybe five or six.

AK: And once a year, he'd slaughter a pig. People in the community would come, the Filipinos would come to help him slaughter, clean, and whatnot. He'd cut up the pig and give (slabs of pork) to the people whom he gathered the slop from. And the people that helped, the Filipinos, he'd give them some, too. They liked the head, the blood, and the intestines. He'd give them once a year.

AIK: Once when we celebrated our birthday, Amy and I happen to have the same birthday month, he made a *lū'au* for us. You know it was really neat.

TK: On several occasions too, he'd slaughter and sell the meat for extra income.

AIK: Their raising pigs was neat because there was one pig that we kept as a sow. And Dad would rent a boar and he would breed . . .

AK: But that wasn't ours.

AIK: He would rent the Teshima's boar.

AK: Oh yes, yes.

AIK: The sow is the female.

AK: Yeah, right.

AIK: He would breed them. And when that sow is ready to give birth, Dad would fill up the pen with sawdust. And then when the pig actually started giving birth we would go there to watch. Dad would help . . .



TK: Early in the morning.

AIK: Help the sow give birth to all the piglets. That was interesting, too.

WN: Wow. Your father had a lot of skills, yeah?

AIK: Yeah.

WN: It's something.

AIK: And then of course when the piglets started to grow up, one of my responsibilities was to go feed them. They wouldn't be able to eat the regular pig slop, so I would have to feed them this dry barley. You remember the barley?

AK: No.

AIK: Dad had a small storage shack near where the pigpens were. And I would go there in the afternoon and feed the piglets barley, give them water and stuff like that. When the piglets grew up to a certain age, I don't remember if Dad would do it or he would hire somebody to do it . . .

AK: Castrated.

AIK: . . . but they were all castrated. The males were all castrated. And we went to watch how they did it.

AK: Yeah, we would watch that.

AIK: He would take each male piglet and turn 'em around and he'd grabbed the testicles and with a razor just slit it, and take the . . .

AK: Testicle out.

AIK: . . . testicle out, yeah.

AK: Just cut it.

AIK: Cut it off and . . .

TK: Put on kerosene.

AK: Kerosene.

AIK: . . . dab it with kerosene, you know, that slit, and then let 'em go. Then the pigs would run away just like nothing happened (chuckles). I guess the reason for that was maybe it made the meat better. I don't know the purpose of it, other than to prevent them from becoming boars.

WN: And what parts of the pig did you folks eat?

TK: Well nothing was wasted except for the . . .

AlK: Yeah, even the intestines, like Amy said, the blood, the liver. We ate the intestines too, I mean of course that's after it was cleaned out and everything. And Mom would cut up the intestines and the blood would be mixed with vinegar and it would kind of get hard. Then she would cut up (the blood in small blocks) and then she would put that in *hekka*, chicken *hekka*. And Dad used to make this thing using the pig blood, intestines, all . . .

AK: Oh yeah, yeah.

AlK: He just mixed it all up and cooked it. It has a different taste but you get to like it after a while. And one of the things that I used to like was the intestines. To clean it, Mom would turn it inside out.

AK: But don't get that mixed up with the cow's intestines now.

AlK: No, this is pig intestine.

AK: Pig? Oh.

AlK: She would turn it (inside out) and clean it real good. And then she cut it up in small strips and deep fry it. And when you deep fry it comes really chewy. When you eat that you just keep chewing and chewing.

WN: Add batter? You put with batter or just deep fried it?

AlK: Just plain, just deep fry it.

WN: Wow.

AK: Oh yeah was so good.

AlK: And it was real good.

WN: Sounds good (chuckles).

AlK: When you talk about pig intestines, you wouldn't think about eating it now, but at that time it was good.

AK: Going back, there used to be a flume near the river, and like I said, the river was one block away from our house with all the mango trees along the side of the river, the plum trees. But there was also a flume.

TK: The irrigation system flume.

AK: Yeah, and they would run sugarcane in the flume and the water would push the sugarcane down to the end of the flume. On the days when the flume was running heavily with lot of water, because the flumes were old, you could see the water leaking and you know it's very dangerous to climb the flume. I don't know about these two guys but . . .

(Laughter)

AK: . . . you know, it's hot over there. What we used to do, when the flume was running a trickle and you don't see any cane running because the water is only trickling, we used to sit in the flume, block the water, whatever coming down with our body until it came so

high and we would get wet. And then we'd slide down the flume with whatever little water we could. That's the kind of fun we had.

WN: How wide was the flume?

AK: Really narrow.

WN: Oh, like two-feet wide?

AK: Yeah.

WN: And was it like metal or wooden?

AK: Wood.

TK: So when you got done you had splinters in your back.

AK: Yeah.

(Laughter)

WN: So it was like three pieces?

AK: Yeah.

AIK: It was kind of a V-shape.

WN: V-shape, oh okay.

AIK: Like this.

WN: With the bottom . . .

AIK: The bottom was, oh maybe . . .

AK: But was . . .

WN: V- and U-shaped.

AK: . . . slippery yeah?

TK: The algae.

AK: Yeah, because of the algae.

TK: Grows on the side. Just slide down with the water.

AIK: Actually, she should have explained to you what the purpose of the flume was. When the mill used to harvest sugarcane, and if they harvested close by to where the camp was, the people out in the field would cut the sugarcane, the stalk, and just throw it in the flume. I don't know where the water came from, but the water in the flume would carry the sugarcane stalk all the way down to the end.

WN: Did it go down to the mill?

AK: No.

WN: Oh not that far?

AK: No.

AIK: Where did it go? That's something I never did find out.

AK: Well, some kind of train station, but it didn't go to the mill. There was always a, what you call the empty train . . .

WN: Cane car?

AK: An empty cane car on the bottom, so that it would fall in . . .

AIK: Eventually take it to the mill.

AK: Yeah right, take it to the mill.

AIK: But I never saw where the water came from, I never saw where it went.

(Laughter)

AIK: All I knew was there was a flume there, and you'd know they're harvesting because lots of water would leak out.

WN: Now how elevated was the flume from the ground?

AIK: Gee, right where we lived, I would say about fifteen to twenty feet.

WN: Fifteen feet high. So how did you get up there?

AK: Oh you could climb.

AIK: Climb, they had all these brace . . .

TK: Easy to climb.

AIK: Support beams? Yeah we used to climb the support beams. You get to the top you can see the cane all going down. That's one of the dangerous things we used to do.

WN: So how far, how long would a ride be on the average?

AK: Gee, hundred yards?

TK: Three minutes, yeah.

WN: Wow!

AIK: It went beyond the place we used to call "Up-pond", at least from there to just below . . .

AK: Yeah but I didn't go in the flume from Up-pond, I went in from where we cross the river to go to our pigpens. So from Up-pond to the bridge to get to our pigpen was quite far.

AlK: More than half a mile.

AK: Yeah.

WN: Wow, and then you would walk back after the ride was over?

AK: I guess so.

(Laughter)

AlK: This thing that I mentioned about a pond, there was a stream that ran between the camp and where the pigpens were located, and . . .

AK: That's the river.

AlK: . . . we used to call it *kahawai*. Hawaiian name for river right? When it rained that's where all the water would come down. There was one section when the water came down the river, it would fall from a high elevation down to a lower elevation, and right where the water fell it created a pond, and then the water would flow from there farther on down the stream. But that pond, because it was located on the upper part of the camp, we used to call it Up-pond, and everybody knew where that place was.

TK: It was deep enough to swim in. People walked up there to swim.

WN: Was there fish inside?

AlK: Oh just the ordinary goby [*'o'opu*] and maybe mosquito fish, that's all.

WN: But right in the flumes you folks wouldn't do it when they're harvesting?

AK: No, because you can tell from the water leaking from the flumes that it's dangerous to go, full of sugarcane. But when it trickles down, again it's leaking but the leak is very minimal as compared to when a lot of water is coming down the flume. You can see the water just gushing out from the holes. But like I said, we never went hungry because we only lived about a block away from the sugarcane tracks. And in the afternoons we would go down to the tracks. We'd know just which cane was sweet, just from the looks of it from the outside. Pull it out of the sugarcane train, or whatever you call that.

TK: Car.

AK: Sugarcane car, pull it out. We knew just how to crack it where it's supposed to crack, because the train tracks, underneath there is a hole. We find the space where the hole is. We'd put the cane underneath that space and put it right at the place where you know it's going to crack, and crack it.

AlK: You do that if you don't have a knife to peel the sugarcane.

AK: Right.

AIK: Otherwise if you have—I used to take Mom’s kitchen knife, you know the *hōchō*?  
(Laughs)

AK: Oh, yeah.

AIK: The kitchen knife, her favorite kitchen knife, I would take it down with me and I’d go down to the train track and chew sugarcane. Almost every day I used to do that after school. (Laughs)

WN: Now this stuff, like playing on the flumes and picking cane like that, did you folks get caught or was that just something that they just turned their heads away?

AK: I think they just . . .

AIK: I think the way I learned it was Dad took me down.

(Laughter)

AIK: Dad took me down to go pick sugarcane and then I just kind of did what he did. But he never used to scold me when I used to do that because he took me down there and that’s how I learned it.

TK: We played on the cars too, sugarcane cars, and pulled out the canes, the very best ones. And as the cars were moving we’re still pulling. Sometimes we were even on the car while it’s moving and trying to find the right cane, while it’s moving toward the sugar mill. But that was one of the playgrounds, too. The sugarcane cars would be moving and we’d be playing in that area. So we never thought about the dangers.

AK: And like we said, we were one of the few that had cars. When we’d be playing, we’d be all over the camp. We’d be up in the tree down by the river picking plum or mango, or down in the river trying to catch fish. And Mom or Dad, even if they wanted to call us, we wouldn’t be able to hear because it’s quite far. But because of that car, when they needed us, all they needed to do was toot that horn (TK laughs), and it had a distinct sound to that horn. They just tooted the horn and we just knew, time to go home, they’re calling us. That’s how they called us.

WN: Now your friends, your playmates, were they all the same, you know, children of plantation workers?

TK: Basically they did the same thing we did (chuckles).

AK: Yeah.

AIK: Yeah.

TK: Get in trouble.

AIK: At that time I think it really didn’t matter how old you were, as long as you were part of the camp, we all used to play together.

WN: What organized things did they have in the camp, did they have parties, dances, anything like that?

TK: Each camp had a clubhouse. Kuhua had two clubhouses. And occasionally they would have camp meetings. I remember every Christmas, just before Christmas, the kids would get together and the older kids would teach maybe the little kids a certain song or dance, and we'd have a community Christmas program. So it was like the camp participating. If they weren't participating they would come and watch the program. So I remember being in several of the programs. Santa Claus would always come. And several nights they would show a movie, right on the road, in the middle of the road (chuckles), with a big screen. But I don't know how often we had that.

AK: We had camp dances, we had . . .

TK: I don't remember the dances.

WN: What was the clubhouse like? How big was it?

TK: In fact it was right next to the *furo*.

AIK: Seems like it was somebody's house, I mean, it was just one building.

TK: One long building.

AIK: One long building, yeah. It was an abandoned building. It was all beat up and everything.

WN: Did they have like a stage or anything?

AK: No.

TK: No.

AIK: Didn't have a stage, yeah?

AK: Just one room with windows on the side and one big front door, steps leading up. It was like a church, yeah?

AIK: Oh maybe it was.

AK: Yeah right. So we had dances in there.

AIK: That time we never thought about it, but the floors were all termite eaten. But they used to have dances and everything. The windows didn't have any glass pane on, it was just an open window.

AK: Yeah, right. There was another clubhouse across the street.

TK: It was smaller.

AK: I don't know what we used that for but right next to it there was a barbershop. One of the ladies in the camp (was a barber) so we would go to her to have our hair cut.

WN: Was it a barbershop or was it just her house that she . . .

AK: No it was a barbershop.



WN: It was a barbershop.

TK: Everybody got the same *chawan* cut hair, you know. (WN laughs.)

WN: What about things like stores, was there stores nearby or did you have to go all the way to Lahaina?

AIK: We all had to go to (downtown) Lahaina.

WN: You go to Lahaina for any store?

AIK: Yeah.

AK: Like I said, I forgot how old I was, I was still in grammar school, my dad bought me a bicycle when he came to Honolulu one time. So I was one of the very first in the camp to have a bicycle, but even at that, I was not allowed to go into town with the bicycle. I could just ride it around the camp. And the farthest I went was probably—as you're coming into the camp by the mill there was a coconut tree—the farthest I could ride the bike was to that coconut tree. And boy that was a big deal because it was like I am leaving my neighborhood to go to the coconut tree and back. But eventually as I grew up, maybe high school, I rode the bike into town to go and pick up the newspaper for some of the neighbors.

WN: And yet going to school you had to go through town, right?

AK: Yeah.

WN: So you said sometimes you walked, but most of the time you rode, right?

AK: No.

TK: We walked most of the time.

WN: What was it like leaving the camp and going to a place like [Lahaina] town? Was it really a different experience or anything like that?

TK: Walking to school was natural, everybody was walking at the same time. But I don't remember ever walking to town just to go to the store.

AIK: For me when I started kindergarten I remember Dad taking me to school on his bike every morning.

AK: Oh yeah?

WN: Bicycle?

AIK: There is this bar [on the bicycle] right in front. I would sit on that bar and he would (WN chuckles) take me to school.

AK: Oh.

AIK: He did that, I think, only when I was in kindergarten, and once I started first grade I used to walk to school with my friends. And like she said, at that time it wasn't a big deal

because everybody was doing it. And of course we used to walk to town to go to the movies, Sundays like that.

WN: And where was the movies?

AIK: We had two theaters at that time, but the one that we used to go to all the time, or more often, was Queen Theatre. Because it was closer to the camp and walking-wise it was easier. We just had to walk right through the cane fields.

WN: And the other one was Pioneer?

AIK: Pioneer Theater. It was more . . .

TK: Next to the banyan tree.

AIK: Yeah, next to the banyan tree.

WN: Near school then?

AIK: More towards the school. But that theater we only used to go on . . .

AK: Saturdays.

AIK: Once in a while, but Queen Theatre was nearly every Sunday. They used to have what they call the chapter series.

AK: Yeah, chapter and . . .

TK: Nayoka, the jungle girl. Superman (chuckles).

WN: So Tom Mix and all that.

AK: Yeah right, yeah.

WN: How much was the theater? How much to get in?

AIK: Ah, it varied. The most I remember paying in cash was nine cents. Every so often they would have this special. If you had so many soda caps, you can get in with soda caps.

AK: Oh yeah? I don't remember.

AIK: But you had to have so many soda caps.

AK: I don't remember that.

AIK: I don't know why they did that but they did.

WN: Now when you went to Kam III School, there was town kids there, kids from all over. Were there any differences between you folks and say, the town kids?

AIK: I didn't think so.

WN: Did you notice anything like that?

- AlK: (If anything, they were more refined, and maybe a bit smarter. But we got along well.)
- AK: No, we played together, we got along well. Although the camp kids stayed together, but we played with the town kids.
- WN: They didn't look down on you folks or anything like that?
- AlK: No. (In fact, some of my best friends came from Downtown.)
- AK: No. But while I went to school, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, we had to wear gas masks.
- WN: During the war [i.e. World War II]?
- AK: Yeah, so we had to carry the gas masks with us. And every now and then we'd have the gas mask drill. Everybody carried gas mask. No matter how big or how small you were, you carried the gas mask. And the school yard was all dug with the trenches, trenches here, trenches there. And we'd always have drills so that when the air raid siren would go off, the class would have to get out of the rooms and you have to know exactly which trench to go in. We'd all go in trenches. The trenches were actually holes, open on the top. You just walked down in the trenches and you stayed there until the drill was over. I don't know how many years we carried that gas mask, but it was something you just had to do and we never grumbled. You know, you had your school bag, your gas mask, and as small as we were, we knew just how to put the gas mask on, you know, we practiced so often.
- AlK: That, I don't remember.
- WN: Yeah I think they were too young.
- AK: Yeah.
- AlK: That would be about in the 1940s.
- AK: Yeah.
- AlK: Oh yeah, I would be too young, because I was born 1939, so I was only (laughs) couple years.
- WN: Now there were some stores in Lahaina, like one that had, that sold, what's that *chow fun* in the paper cone?
- AK: Yeah, Yamafuji.
- WN: Yamafuji [Liberty Restaurant]. People were telling me about that was pretty famous. Did you do that, did you go to town for food like that?
- TK: We didn't actually go to town for the *chow fun* but it was a big treat on the last or the first day of school because it was half a day. We would get out just about lunchtime, and we would stop over there for, what we called it, *yaki udon*.

(Laughter)

AIK: Well, we used to refer it as “fry soup.”

WN: Fry soup?

AK: Yeah fry soup.

AIK: Fry soup, yeah. I don’t know how they came up with fry soup because that’s actually *chow fun*.

TK: And you know we ended up buying those cone things and eating it on the way home.

AK: The cone was actually pink store paper. Right?

WN: Butcher paper?

AK: Yeah, butcher paper they’d make into a cone and then stuff the *chow fun* inside and cover it. And you can put *shōyu* if you want. On the way home you’d eat it.

WN: Wouldn’t leak?

AK: No, well, you don’t put that much *shōyu* inside.

AIK: Yeah it’s based on how it’s folded. It wouldn’t leak at all, never matter how much *shōyu* you added.

WN: The oil wouldn’t go through?

AK: No, it’s not oily. And did you know that, today, that restaurant is no longer there but one of the sons of that restaurant owner had married this girl from our camp. Now, the son is deceased, but this girl still makes the *chow fun*. So when we go back to Maui, I always order the *chow fun* from her.

WN: You mean she makes it herself?

AK: Yeah. But you have to call her. You call her and she’ll make it for you. She charges ten dollars for a small . . .

AIK: Pie box.

AK: . . . pie box, ten dollars. Ah it’s so delicious (WN laughs). My daughter, my husband, I don’t know who else, they say it tastes like cardboard, so they’ll not eat. He went to Lahainaluna, but he won’t eat it, says there is no taste. But we all just love it ’cause we’re brought up, you know, we just love it. And sometimes, Yamamoto Store, we’d buy shave ice on the way home or else there was a goodie-goodie store on the end, we’d buy goodie-goodie. Dad always gave us money, five cents, ten cents. We wouldn’t buy every day, but we’d buy.

TK: It would be like a treat when he’d give us the money.

AK: There was a Chinese store that sold seeds, we’d buy seeds. He’d put the seeds in a small paper bag, not the plastic bags like they have today. It was in a paper sack, small paper sack. You eat the seed. Now when you done with eating the seed, you don’t just throw

away the paper sack, you get leftover sticking on the side. You put the whole thing in your mouth, the bag and all, and you chew the bag and all until all the taste is gone.

(Laughter)

WN: Now what were your chores? Let's go one at a time, tell me what you had to do around the house.

AK: I started with---I don't know whether I wanted to be smart or I wanted to be a good girl or whatever, but I don't remember starting it. But my mom used to work at the cannery. I'd watch how she'd wash clothes and whatnot and she had an old wringer washing machine. My father would boil the water in the tub, so I'd watch. So one time, one day, I told my dad, "Dad, why don't you boil me water, I am going to wash clothes." I watched my mom enough to know what. So after the water got hot I carried the water to the washing machine, did the laundry, and I hung up the clothes. I took it upon myself to do it. And that was on weekends only, but I washed clothes. I learned how to make my own starch because Mom always starched our clothes, the ones that needed to be ironed. From pillowcases to all her cannery working clothes, everything had to be ironed. Then . . .

WN: How do you make starch?

AK: Some kind of---it looks like flour but it's starch.

WN: Oh so you actually buy it, like powdery stuff from the store.

AK: Yeah, and then you get a pan, pot or whatever, you scoop some of that powder in and you mix it with water. Just like how you mixing corn starch and flour. You mix it with cold water first. And then you pour the hot water and then it'll thicken. 'Cause if you don't watch out the mixture can be lumpy, you don't want it to get lumpy. And they used a lot of bluing before. You don't see bluing nowadays.

WN: Right.

AK: But when she did her sheets she used bluing to make the sheets white. Then I had to sweep and mop the house every day. I had to . . .

TK: Wash the dishes (chuckles).

AK: . . . yeah, but I had to do the heater. We had a heater, oil heater, so I had to make the heater until . . .

WN: Oil heater for what?

AK: The heater for hot water.

WN: Oh, okay.

AIK: Wash, bathwater.

AK: Yeah, every afternoon. That was it. I don't remember the dishes, but maybe I did help, I don't know. My mom and my dad were both smokers, so every now and then when we're outside playing or whatever, "Oh Amy go get me one cigarette." And I thought I be smart, and instead of just getting a cigarette and a match and taking it out to them, I'd

light it in the house and then take it out to them. But you know, I'm glad I never learned to smoke. All the time that they asked me for cigarette, I never learned to smoke, but they smoked.

I swept and mopped the house, did the laundry, made the heater. My mom ironed every weekend. What was washed on Saturday, Sunday, was all ironing. I'd see her ironing from morning until lunch.

WN: Was it electric iron?

AK: Yeah. And so the only easy thing that I could iron was pillowcases, you know easy yeah, straight. She sprinkled the starched pillowcases with water, folded from the night before and put in this bundle, and next morning all the sprinkled clothes had to be ironed. Oh that was a lot of clothes.

WN: Did she just do for your family?

AK: Yeah, but even that was. . . . So even if Sunday was her day off, it was no day off for her.

WN: What about cooking, did you do any cooking?

AK: No, I didn't do any.

WN: Your mom did all the cooking.

AK: My mom did all the cooking, yeah.

AlK: Dad used to do a lot of cooking, too. He made good stew. And one of my favorite was the tripe stew that he used to make. I loved that.

AK: Yeah, he made good stew.

AlK: He made stew in such a way that he puts this large elbow macaroni in it, and you don't see people put macaroni in stew. But he used to do that and it was good.

TK: Well, we had an uncle who worked at the hospital as a cook so Dad would help him. That's where he learned how to cook.

WN: So your mom did most of the day-to-day type cooking, and your dad did like what, special-occasion kind?

AK: Yeah.

AlK: Sometimes, whenever he felt like cooking.

TK: My dad would make *laulau*.

WN: Oh he would make *laulau*?

AK: Not when we were small but he started to make *laulau* after we were all in high school. He'd make *laulau* and he'd give to people. He'd pass it around to people. My mom was very good with pickling.

WN: With what?

AK: Pickles.

WN: Oh.

AK: *Tsukemono*. Oh she made all kinds of *tsukemono* and she was really really good at that.

WN: With the salt and water or with the miso?

AK: No, salt and water and some with vinger and whatnot, all kinds, and she used to give it to people. And they really enjoyed that.

WN: What did she pickle, like what kind?

AK: You know the *daikon*?

WN: Mm-hmm [yes].

AK: She'd pickle the leaves of the *daikon*. She'd chop the leaves up real small and she'd pickle it. And then another type would be the *daikon*, she'd cut it up and mix it with the leaves and also pickle that.

AlK: She used to make her own *takuan*, too. She was very good at *namasu*.

WN: What about *nasubi*?

AK: No.

WN: I always think of Lahaina *nasubi* that's why (laughs).

AK: Yeah but it's hard to get.

WN: Yeah.

AK: So no she didn't. But she was self-taught. I don't know how she learned but she was really really good with her hands. She could crochet. I don't if she could knit, but the things that she used to crochet—oh, she used to make dolls. She'd go buy us the doll face, the doll hands, and around that she made a huge doll. Afghans, socks. Oh she was really good at that.

AlK: Mom used to pickle mangos, too.

TK: Oh that's right.

AlK: You know the red mangos, she'd used to pickle mangos and . . .

AK: Yeah, peaches.

AlK: . . . peaches and plums.

TK: Mango seed.



AIK: Mango seed, yeah.

TK: We grew a lot of vegetables, too. We always had a garden.

WN: Okay yeah, so what was in the garden? What kind of vegetables?

TK: Well, *daikon*, corn, tomatoes . . .

AK: Beets.

TK: . . . cucumbers, radishes, beans, lettuce in season, pretty much anything. At one time Dad tried watermelon but it was too hot in Lahaina. What else?

AK: We also raised poultry.

TK: Oh yeah.

AK: We had poultry for eggs. And I think every Sunday Mom killed the chicken, yeah?

AIK: Often, yeah.

AK: Yeah.

TK: We had lots of chickens too, so we had lots of eggs. Sometimes the Filipino neighbor down the road would come to buy the eggs, but I don't know how much Dad sold them for. But when he [Filipino neighbor] didn't have money he would bring a lobster to trade for a dozen eggs. But it was a real treat for us.

WN: Was that common? Was there a lot of trading like that?

TK: That was the only thing I remember Dad trading. I don't remember anybody else doing that, do you?

AIK: (Only recall Dad selling eggs, rather than trading.)

WN: So you folks had a garden, you folks had poultry for eggs and chicken, and you folks had pigpen. How did you get the other goods to cook your meals? Like rice for example. Where did the rice come from?

AIK: We generally bought it from the store. I don't know which one. (Kishi, or Nagasako, maybe.)

AK: Yeah, my dad worked at the plantation[-owned] store and they called it Lahaina Store, that sold general merchandise from fabric to shoes to meats to vegetables to clothing. He was the delivery person who delivered the food products. I don't think they delivered any other kind of merchandise, mostly food products. And so we bought all our merchandise from the Lahaina Store. I think the merchandise was charged to his account. And how he paid it was they probably deducted it from his payroll at the time. I don't know, I have no idea.

WN: You folks have pretty varied diet with all the different, the garden and the chickens and so forth.

AK: Mm-hmm [yes].

AIK: Yeah, my father used to go fishing quite a bit. And whenever he would take us to the beach we'd see if he could pick some 'opihi or pick up some seaweed. And this one, I don't know what the real name of it is, but we used to call it chop-chop. It's a bristly type seaweed. But you chop it up real fine, and maybe you can mix with 'opihi and then kind of like add vinegar to it. Somewhat like a *poke* texture you might say. Yeah we had all that too.

TK: Instead of putting *ogo* it was chop-chop.

WN: (To AIK:) So what were your chores?

AIK: Oh okay, until I was old enough to do anything, of course I would just go out and play with my friends. But I think I started off by raking up the yard. And then as I started getting older, we started sharing some of our responsibilities. I remember every day after dinner one of us would wash the dishes, one person would wipe the dishes dry, and maybe the third one would put the dishes away. And cleaning house somebody would sweep, somebody would mop. I guess that was on a rotation basis, take turns doing that. And I would also be responsible for feeding the chickens. We had chicken feed that my father bought and I would mix that with this grass that my father grew. I would get this chopper and chop up the grass and mix it with the chicken feed, and feed all the chickens.

We also had a dog. In fact we had dogs for quite a while and I think it was my responsibility to feed the dog also. On certain days I would also go down to the pigpen and feed the pigs. But most enjoyable (I actually had fun) was making the bathwater, and I thought I became pretty good at that because I had two different methods of doing it. And one was with that oil burner that you mentioned, and the other one was using this wood burner. Of course, I would have to change the fixture from the oil to the wood burner. But I became so good at it, in fact I could get the fire going so strong that if you look at the top of the heater you could see the flames coming out.

(Laughter)

AIK: I don't think Dad was too pleased about that, but as long he got hot water I guess he was happy.

WN: So this is hot water for everything or just the *furo*?

AIK: Everything.

AK: Did we have hot water in the kitchen?

AIK: Sure. (We had a hot and cold water faucet.)

AK: We did?

AIK: Yeah.

AK: Oh.

AIK: And then we had this wooden tub, a *furo* inside the bathroom. I had to empty out the old water from the night before and wash the inside of the tub, put the plug back and fill up

the tub, maybe about halfway with hot water. To bathe, we learned before, kind of like wash and rinse yourself. When you're clean enough, you go in the tub and just sit in it, you know, soothe yourself (*nukumeru*).

WN: So was this *furo* later on after you folks were using the community one?

AIK: Yeah, 'cause after a while they tore down that community bathroom, so everybody had to have their own.

WN: You know about when that was?

AIK: Oh. No.

WN: Trudy, do you remember the community bath?

TK: I remember the community bath, but I don't remember when they stopped.

AK: I was still at home when we were already using the washhouse in our house. So, gee I don't know, maybe when I was fifth grade, sixth grade when we stopped. Oh I don't know that time.

AIK: You know what I remember most about that bathroom? I don't know why, but you know when Grandma died? She died in the hospital. My father bought my grandmother's body home, and I guess it was tradition. You know before they buried it or before the funeral services, you give the body a last bath. Dad and I were in the bathroom, *Obā-chan's* body, and were giving her a bath.

AK: Really?

AIK: Yeah. I remember that so distinctly well. Of course at that time I didn't think anything of it, it was just a body, right? Me and Dad were in the bathroom giving Grandma a bath.

WN: Yeah, I know, that was the tradition before.

AIK: Maybe the thing that I remember that made it so distinct was because she had a ring on, a gold band, and I was helping Dad to try to take the ring off from her hand. But I didn't think anything of it that time, it was just a body, a dead body, you know. (Laughs) I never did forget that.

WN: Okay Trudy, what kind of chores did you have?

TK: Well, mostly picked up what they left me . . .

(Laughter)

AIK: Which was everything.

TK: Yeah, so the housecleaning came to be a weekend chore. It was Saturdays mainly; sweep and mop, do the dishes.

END OF SIDE TWO

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WN: Okay, so you did the dishes.

TK: Do the dishes. By the time Allen left [we had a clothes] washing machine, one of the modern ones, so it became easier. So we would wash whenever we had a load and just hang it out to dry.

Every afternoon I had to do three cups of rice. I don't know if we ate the whole thing, but it was three cups of rice every day. And it's not the rice cooker, you had to be right there to watch it so that it doesn't overflow on the stove (WN chuckles). I'd set the table. Mom would always cook. And it's amazing too because Dad liked to fish and he would bring home all kinds of fish and she would make tempura, debone the fish and fix it with vegetables and things that you would normally buy at the store right now. Mom was able to fix. And Allen talked about bringing home seaweed. There are different kinds of seaweed and I remember Mom did something to this seaweed and made into like a gel. She put it in her refrigerator and it would gel and then she'd cut it up.

WN: Like *kanten* then, huh?

TK: Yeah, I don't know what type, but she would make all kind of things with seaweed. I don't know if people still eat the [sea] urchin, *wana*, but Dad would go out, every now and then. He knew exactly when the *wana* was just right. Mom would fix that, too. So we would have *ogo* at the table. It's not like *pupu* but it became sort of like a main dish for us, 'cause we had lots of vegetables and very little meat. Mom would add lots of vegetables to stretch the meal.

And by then, in high school, my sophomore year, I was able to drive the car. It was standard shift. They trusted me with the car, and never questioned where I was going or what time I was coming home. I always made sure that when I went somewhere I'd tell them, and I always came back before eleven 'cause I didn't want to abuse my privileges.

On payday Dad would always call us to the table, we would sit there, and he would give us our allowance every month. And that would last us for . . .

WN: Once a month?

TK: . . . the whole month.

WN: Wow.

TK: If we ran short that was it. (WN chuckles.) I remember it went up to about twenty dollars a month (laughs).

AIK: I used to get fifteen at that time.

TK: Fifteen?

AIK: Yeah. At that time it was quite a bit, for me anyway. 'Cause we really didn't have that much to spend on.

TK: Well, I had to pay for my lunch every day.

AK: The bus, the bus fare.

ALK: Dad used to pay for me; I never used to have to pay for that. He would go down to Kawabata's, the liquor store, and he would pay it over there. I never had to pay for that.

WN: Did you folks work at all during school time, like plantation or anything like that?

ALK: Cannery.

WN: You worked at the cannery?

ALK: Yeah.

TK: It was during the summer. Pineapple was in season so they needed the extra help. So Baldwin Packers hired the high school kids. That was hard work (laughs).

AK: I was fortunate because my first year of work, Lahainaluna High School office hired me. I don't know how come. Maybe my business teacher had something to say about it. But I worked in the office. This was after my sophomore year, so that summer before I became a junior, I worked in the office.

The following summer I worked in the cannery, and after I graduated I worked in the cannery. But in between my junior and senior year, I think, lot of the kids used to work in the cane fields on Saturdays, and it seemed liked so much fun. So I thought I would go to join them, so I went to work in the cane field with them.

WN: Doing what?

AK: What would you call that?

TK: *Hō hana*.

WN: *Hō hana*.

AK: *Hō hana*, the weeds.

WN: So you were the only one who worked in the fields? You folks didn't have to work?

ALK: I didn't work in the fields.

TK: No.

WN: You folks were actually kind of lucky the cannery was there, 'cause some plantation areas didn't have cannery.

AK: Forty-nine cents.

WN: Forty-nine cents, an hour?

AK: Forty nine cents at the office, I think it was, the school office. I don't know how much I got at the cannery.

WN: I'm wondering too, being the oldest, did you have to take care of them?

AK: I had to take care of her (TK laughs), I remember I had to baby-sit her.

WN: Oh your mom working and your dad working?

AK: Must be, yeah. Maybe summertime I had to take care of her. And the only way I could get her to go to sleep was to make her cry.

WN: What?

(Laughter)

AK: I had to piggyback her, and I'd take her down to the train track area where all the kids gathered. They were all taking cane from the sugarcane train. And I'd go with them, but with her on my back. She was real small, 'cause we're eight years apart. And I'd always want her to go to sleep. I used to make her cry. I don't know how (TK laughs) I used to make her cry. I used to make her cry all the time. Either there was a scared man, and she used to be scared of the man. But I used to tell her, "Trudy, I used to make you cry all the time."

WN: Is this on purpose? Just so that she would cry and go to sleep.

AK: But I did baby-sit her. I really didn't have anything to do with him. (WN laughs.)

AIK: I was probably out playing with my friends anyway.

WN: Now being the only boy and the middle child was it different for you, as compared to these two?

AIK: No (chuckles). I don't know, we always used to fight, I can remember that much.

(Laughter)

WN: Did you get more privileges because you're a boy or anything like that, you remember that?

AK: I don't think so. (Probably had more chores and responsibilities.)

WN: Oh, okay.

AIK: We were all equal I think.

WN: That's pretty good.

AIK: Maybe sometimes I thought I was better and smarter than they were.

(Laughter)

TK: We all had chores, we all did our part.

WN: What was New Year's like?

AK: I remember New Year's only—we didn't play firecrackers. Did we play? We never played firecrackers. New Year's Eve you got to clean the house because you don't want

to be sweeping the house after New Year's. Otherwise you'd be sweeping for the rest of the year. But New Year's Day you served food, you have the food ready. People used to come to the house. That's all I remember. Oh, and we would go to neighbor's house and we would eat at their house. That's all I remember about New Year's.

WN: People would come and you folks would go . . .

AK: Yeah, to their house.

TK: And Dad picked up garbage from this place called Rainbow . . .

AK: Inn.

TK: Rainbow Inn.

AK: Slop you mean, pig slop.

TK: Oh yeah, pig slop. And across from Rainbow Inn was Len's Sweet Shop. They sold seeds and candy, and people who went to the theater would stop over there. Anyway Len's Sweet Shop would give us firecrackers every year. And so we did play firecrackers.

AK: And so you did have firecrackers, then?

TK: Oh yeah. We had "papa hu," "baby hu," "mama hu" (laughs). Not, well, cherry bombs and all kinds. The fun part was holding the baby hu, it was a really small one, right on the tip of our fingers and let it pop. It was really small, not the real big ones. And we would think of all kind of things to play with the firecrackers. We'd have a hole in the can and put the firecracker in the can. And there's another can with water in it so you put that can in there and light that can and see when it pops. That can would shoot up in the air. And what else did we do?

AlK: I used to have a little cannon that I used to make out of a copper tube. You make a hole near the end of one of the tubes and then you stuff a firecracker down one end and another one in front of it and you light one of 'em. When the first firecracker explodes it would light this firecracker at the same time, shoot it out. (WN laughs.) I mean, sometimes it worked. Also, the one about getting one can and filling it partially with water. And putting a smaller can inside of it. And the smaller can you'd make a little hole on the top, just big enough to put a firecracker in. And then when you light that and the firecracker explodes, the small can would shoot way up. It was interesting.

TK: But there weren't a lot of fireworks.

AlK: Yeah. What I remember about New Year's is that every New Year's [eve] the mill would sound the . . .

AK: Oh yeah, at midnight.

AlK: The horn or whatever, bell, no.

AK: Yeah.

TK: Yeah.



AIK: Siren or something. Every New Year's they would do that. But, as far as fireworks on New Year's Eve I don't remember playing. But the next day, the people that played fireworks, a lot of 'em wouldn't explode, right?

TK: I thought it blew the whistle at midnight.

AIK: The horn, yeah, at midnight, but the next day, New Year's Day . . .

TK: It was pretty quiet.

AIK: Well, all the fireworks that didn't pop, we would go around picking all those up and we'd play with those. And we used to do some wicked things to it.

AK: And the ones that didn't pop we'd open it and pour all the powder down and make our own (laughs).

AIK: You know what I used to do with that? All the unpopped firecrackers, I used to gather 'em all, open it all up, and take all the powder out. And, inside the firecrackers there's a little piece of fuse that didn't burn, I'd take that and I put 'em into a little pile. Sometimes the pile got pretty high. Get a small little rock, put it right on the top of the powder, get a bigger rock, and hit that small little rock. Oh, that thing would go off like a bomb, boy. I tried it at home, here, you know. (Shook the neighborhood!)

AK: You mean just the spark from the big rock to the small rock.

WN: Oh, I see.

AIK: (I'm surprised no one called the police.)

WN: You wouldn't light it then?

AIK: You don't have to light it, just the friction from the that big rock hitting the little rock.

WN: Wow.

AIK: I tell you it just rocked the neighborhood!

(Laughter)

AIK: Oh, yeah, one time I did that in the *kahawai*, by the . . .

AK: Near the bridge?

AIK: No, it was above the bridge. You know where the Fujiwara family used to live? And on the left-hand side there's a Filipino house. Two Filipino houses. I was in the *kahawai*, right outside. (When it exploded, the Filipino family came out to see what was going on.)

(Laughter)

AIK: (It's loud, and even the pressure from the blast can give you a good jolt.)

AK: But going back to that mill horn, if I'm not mistaken that horn sounded every morning. Didn't it sound every morning?



- AIK: At seven o'clock. That's to start work and . . .
- AK: Yeah and at three o'clock or . . .
- AIK: Three-thirty.
- AK: . . . three-thirty in the afternoon . . .
- AIK: *Pau hana.*
- AK: Yeah, every day.
- AIK: You hear that (imitates sound of horn and laughs).
- AK: And you could tell the time from that horn. So, it sounded like it was coming out of the smokestack, that big smokestack that they're thinking of tearing down. But anyway, it was a huge loud noise, every day.
- WN: Did you folks come into contact with any of the bosses, plantation bosses or their kids, or anything like that?
- AIK: If anything, we just heard of their names and who they were. But personal contact, no. I don't think I ever saw them.
- AK: The plantation manager's wife was our schoolteacher in high school.
- AIK: Oh yours.
- AK: Mrs. [Gertrude] Moir. That was about it. And had some *Haole* kids, so the fathers must have been bosses. I don't know if we went to school with them. That's about it.
- AIK: Yeah, when we were growing up, I guess we considered *Haoles* as being different, so we never associated much with *Haoles*.
- AK: Oh, we didn't have a chance to do it anyway because they were not in the camp.
- AIK: We didn't have any in the camp but maybe in school. To me, at that time, they were sort of like a different breed. But Orientals are Orientals, regardless whether they Chinese, Korean, Japanese, we're all one type. But *Haoles*, yeah . . .
- TK: They were upper class you mean? Elite.
- AIK: Well maybe in a sense it was kind of like looking up to them, that they were better than us. I don't know why, but Filipinos, Portuguese, and others we were all equal. 'Cause we had lot of 'em living in the camp with us.
- WN: Well, let me go into, you know, we were—I've changed my mind, I don't think we are going to get into Lahainaluna School and then your work experience, 'cause I got pretty much that. But what I want to do is to talk about today and what did you folks learn from the plantation experience, or growing up on the plantation, that you take with you today? What's the most important thing that you've learned growing up on a place like Pioneer Mill? You folks talked about everybody in the same boat, togetherness and doing things, making your own toys and things like that. How different is life then compared to today?

AK: Today's kids are spoiled. They've got so many things that they can get from the store. Our time, we couldn't get any toys, so we made our own toys. And we were poor, but we didn't know that we were poor and yet we were happy.

WN: I think, too, every generation thinks as the next generation as being more spoiled than they were. I bet if I had interviewed your mother and father, they would say, "Oh spoiled." (Laughs)

AK: Yeah, yeah.

TK: We never had things to play with. We always had to make up our own things, so then it was fun, more fun than actually playing with objects. We had chores to do so it taught us responsibility. If you don't do it, someone else will be burdened with your responsibility. We had to work for what we wanted. And living within a small group of people, in our camp, we knew almost everybody. We trusted them, we didn't have to lock our doors. Whereas now, everywhere you go you have to lock everything before you leave. So I think I appreciated that life. Everything was so easygoing.

AIK: We didn't think so at that time though, as far as being easygoing. When you think about it now, yeah.

AK: Well now when you think about it, yeah, but at that time . . .

AIK: We didn't think it was easy.

AK: I didn't even know it was hard. We just did what we were supposed to do, it wasn't like, "Oh this is hard, why do we have to do this?"

TK: Get her granddaughter to wash dishes. "Who me?"

(Laughter)

TK: Like you're asking them to move a mountain.

AK: Or you tell her to sweep the floor, she doesn't know how to use the broom. We had to clean our classrooms when we were going to school. Or when we went to cafeteria we had to do cafeteria monitor at grammar school. We had to wash dishes, we had to do all that kind of stuff.

WN: In raising your own kids, did you try to instill any of these kinds of values in your kids?

TK: We did (laughs). But peer pressure, too.

WN: So why do you folks think it's important for kids, next generations, to know about what the plantation life was like?

AK: So they know what hardship we went through, although at that time we didn't know, but all the hardship when they read about what we went through, what our parents went through, then they'll know what hardship is. 'Cause like I said, my granddaughter doesn't know how to sweep. You tell her to sweep the floor, they don't know how.

TK: We made our own fun.

AK: Yeah.

TK: With no cost.

AK: You don't need to go buy GameBoy or all this kind of expensive things. We didn't even have cell phones and stuff like that. Kids nowadays all have cell phones. But yet when you talk about how did we raise our kids, I think we tried to give them what we were not able to have when we were growing up. So in a sense you kind of spoiled them.

TK: I think every generation is going to be that way because the times are changing too, everything is technology. It can't be helped, but we can instill our values. You are going to learn how to sweep the floor. As long as you live in this house, you are going to learn how to wash the clothes, wash the dishes. That you can't get away from every day. I mean you have dishwasher, if you don't, you have to do the dishes by hand. But things outside the home, you know, cell phones, everybody has cell phone now, no matter where you go. If one kid has a cell phone, everybody wants one. GameBoy or whatever it is. We never had TV, whereas people have five or six televisions in the houses now.

At night, I remember, after we came in the house, after playing outside, having dinner everything all done, there was always that in-between time until bedtime, and he [Allen] and I would be so *kolohe*. We'd be playing in the bedroom on a single bed with a *futon* as a blanket, and just to kill time he would get under the blanket, folded pretty high, and I would jump on him. (WN laughs.) And then it would be my turn to be under the blanket and he would jump on me, and that went on and on for I don't know how long. But I remember doing that several times. Mom would never scold us, I remember. You know it was just one of the things we did.

But as I said with technology, we never had air conditioning. What did we do? We went out on the porch at night, sat down and played cards and things like that. During the day we'd go to the beach to cool off. But now we have the AC to cool you off. (Laughs) That's my two cents.

WN: Last time we were talking about, all three of you, right after graduation you left Lahaina. Why did you folks leave? Was that a goal that you all had that you wanted to leave this life and try something else?

AK: For myself, the only way to further my education was to continue school, but in Maui it was Maui Community College, and it was over on the other side of the mountain, and I didn't drive. We had no taxi. We had no bus. So it was like, how am I going to get there? But I was fortunate in that I had a business scholarship upon graduation from high school. Honolulu Business College gave me a scholarship. And so I continued my studies at Honolulu Business College, and went into the secretarial field. That's why I came out to Honolulu.

WN: Was staying on Maui an option for you?

AK: No. Never thought of it because I knew I couldn't get over to the other side to go to the community college.

WN: So education was your main goal at that time?

AK: Yeah, because I didn't think I was ready to go to work. I wanted to go to the Mainland to go to—at that time Woodbury College was a popular business school on the Mainland,

but I knew my parents couldn't afford it. So I never looked into it. And so coming up to Honolulu was the only other choice.

WN: Allen, what about you?

AIK: Actually right after high school my initial thought was to go to college. There was a college in Illinois, Parks College, an aeronautical school, and I had talked about being a aeronautical engineer. But I knew my parents wouldn't be able to afford to send me to college. So my other thought was, being a male, I had a military obligation, so I figured I may as well get over with the obligation and then maybe pursue my schooling after that. So I went into the military. And I guess I would get some training through the military, also traveling, so that was my main reason for leaving Lahaina. And I never considered going back because once I started going to school the possibility of getting a job in the field that I was in at that time was practically nonexistent. 'Cause everything was here in Honolulu.

WN: And what was your parents' thoughts about you folks leaving? Did they ever say anything like don't go or . . .

AK: No.

AIK: I guess it was something they expected, that we would be leaving once we became of age, that we had our own life to live and everything. They never objected to any of our decisions.

WN: Trudy.

TK: Either staying on Maui and working in the pineapple cannery or the sugar mill, which I (laughs) didn't want to do. So I came to Honolulu and went to business school. And business school was a lot cheaper than going to a regular college or university. Mom and Dad paid my way to business school. I lived with Amy for a while, then stayed with a *Haole* family and took care of (their little boy, cleaned the house) for a year. And so that helped a little bit with my business school expenses. But after working in the office for seven months I decided that wasn't my bag so I wanted to go back to school. And this time I wanted to try college, but Mom said she didn't have the money. So my sister and my brother-in-law paid my way. I chose to go to New Mexico and got my B.A. in education. I think that was the best move I ever made, getting my degree in education.

WN: You folks miss Lahaina?

TK: I miss the old times.

WN: Oh you mean the experiences.

TK: Yeah, my growing-up years. There's too much changes now. People whom we grew up with are not there anymore so actually there's not really much left of what we know.

AK: And now that both my parents are not there, we don't have any need to go back home to visit. Especially since we just sold the house a few months ago, six months ago, more so there's really nothing there for us to go back to.

AIK: Yeah, for myself I would say I miss it. I guess what I miss is the way Lahaina used to be. I don't think I'll ever forget how it used to be and maybe that's why I feel that way. One

thing that I really enjoyed doing was hiking up to the top of what we call Mount Ball, where that big *L* is up on the mountain. I used to go up there myself sometimes. And just to go up there and then look down on Lahaina town, it was really something.

WN: What is the future of Lahaina do you think? What do you see Lahaina being in twenty, thirty years? And you can give your opinion, too. (Laughs)

AIK: I think definitely it's going to be different, it's changing already. Seems like everything is going to be geared more towards tourism. And Lahaina will never be the same as it was before.

AK: I think it's a dying town, really. The people, like when my mom was alive, she hardly went downtown. She didn't want to go downtown at all because of the cars, the tourists, it wasn't like before. It seems like everything is geared toward tourists. For the sake of Lahaina, I hope that's [i.e., tourism is] what keeps it going but otherwise it seems like it's just a dying town.

WN: What do you think is going to happen to all the cane land that is up there? I mean, when you go hiking up there, I mean the view must be spectacular.

AIK: When I used to go it was all cane field but lately . . .

TK: When we were in high school, this is me thinking then: Oh I can't wait to get out of high school, I am so tired of all this studying and books. My senior year: Oh gosh only two more months, so few days left. And then we were in the graduation line, the last night, Sunday night. It is a tradition for Lahainaluna to have their graduation on Sunday night at "boarders field" where we had our graduation. The graduates would sit facing Mount Ball, where the *L* is visible. Oh graduates, this is the night. They would give us our diploma. We were all back in our seats, and they were congratulating us, "I present to you the class of 1961." And then we're all standing and singing our alma mater, they turn the lights down, "Ladies and gentlemen look at the *L*." Wow, the tears are coming out (chuckles). I don't know if you know what I am talking about.

WN: Yeah.

AK: 'Cause they light the *L* at night.

TK: Yeah every graduation—I don't know, did they do that?

AIK: Yeah, but we didn't see because we were on the stage. We were facing the audience.

TK: Oh, we were facing the stage towards the *L*. Boy, when you see the *L* and we are singing the alma mater . . .

AIK: *Chicken skin*.

TK: Yeah, talk about *chicken skin*. It just brings tears to my eyes right now.

WN: Being plantation people, is there a sense of pride that you have, saying that you're from plantation?

AK: Yeah.

- WN: When people say, "Where are you from?" And you say that I am from a sugar plantation or I am from Lahaina or something like that, what goes through your mind when you tell people that you are plantation stock (chuckles)?
- AlK: I never referred to myself as being from a plantation. I refer to myself as coming from the country. I never use the term plantation. That's different considering yourself being a country boy, you know, other than being a city person.
- AK: I'm not ashamed. I mean, I consider myself a plantation girl only because, you hear plantation stories, where all these plantation people came from. How the older generation came to Hawai'i way back and how hard they struggled. And because I am part of that and I know how hard they worked, I want people to know that plantation life was hard way back and still is hard now. I want people to know that. I am not ashamed to say I am a plantation [girl].
- WN: There's a movement now to save some parts of the mill or the smokestack. How do you folks feel about that?
- AlK: Yeah, the mill's defiantly an icon, Lahaina icon. I mean without the mill it's just like it's not Lahaina, because initially the plantation started—I mean Lahaina started from a plantation. So, it's just like taking the mill away and you're taking Lahaina away.
- AK: But you know, I have second thoughts about that. I mean I'd like to see the mill there but the condition of the mill today, when you look at it, it's really an eyesore. I feel that it needs to come down because it's such an eyesore.
- AlK: Maybe at this point it's expected because no one is maintaining it.
- WN: Yeah.
- AlK: Now if it can be maintained, it can probably be converted into maybe a mall like the cannery, but it just needs to be maintained. I think that is what they are trying to do.
- WN: What do you think of just the smokestack?
- AlK: Oh just the smokestack?
- WN: Well that's a other option, too.
- AK: Oh yeah, but even the smokestack, they were saying it's kind of dangerous.
- WN: It'll cost a lot, too.
- AK: Right, yeah.
- AlK: That would be something. Because if you are going to Lahaina from Wailuku side for example, you get to a certain point that is about the first thing you see before you get to Lahaina.
- AK: What?
- AlK: The smokestack.



AK: The Lahaina smokestack?

AIK: Yeah. But if anything, that would be something that they should try to get . . .

TK: So when you're out on the ocean from the . . .

AIK: Oh yeah.

TK: . . . on the cruise, the only thing I'm looking for is the smokestack. Our house is right over there (laughs).

WN: So it might be something worth fixing yeah, the smokestack. Plus it has the date up there and everything, too.

TK: Well, they have the *L*.

AK: Gee, I didn't notice the date on the smokestack.

AIK: Eighteen nineteen. No, [1860].

WN: Any last thing before I turn off the tape recorder?

AK: No.

WN: Want to volunteer anything? Or have we pretty much covered it?

AK: Yeah, I think we did.

TK: I think that to really understand what the Pioneer [Mill Company] people did, to really appreciate the plantation life, you had to live it.

AK: You have to have lived it.

TK: To understand it.

WN: Good place to end.

TK: Yeah, probably about thirty, fifty years from now people are going to think, oh you did that? Oh you guys were way behind in your times. So there's a lot of changes going on. Maybe fifty years from now the smokestack will be there.

AK: Oh I don't think so, not fifty years from now.

TK: Lahainaluna would have a new school.

WN: Okay, I am going to turn it off. Thank you very much.

AK: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

# **PIONEER MILL COMPANY:**

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**Center for Oral History  
Social Science Research Institute  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

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